



## NO TIME TO PLAY?

"Can you believe that I have not taken any vacation time in two years!"

"It's too busy at work right now (and always) to take time off."

"If I take a vacation, things will be 10 times worse when I return to work."

Do these statements sound familiar? What could be behind avoiding or delaying vacations? What is the impact on you and others of not taking time off? It is important to stop for a moment and examine what drives your choices...

Underlying a decision not to take time off may be a professional image that you want to project:

"I am such a responsible person."

"I can't let the team down by taking off."

"I want to stay on top of things."

By not taking time to unwind and to turn the "switch off", you may be jeopardizing your productivity, your performance as well as the team's spirit. Perfectionism can be perceived as a quality in certain instances, but can also be fear disguised as strength: fear of not being enough. Perfectionism could also mask low productivity, and to compensate, you end up sacrificing family, social activities, and vacations, in the quest of unachievable goals.

Some people value being perceived as perfect, which can lead them to conceal their mistakes. Consequently, by taking a vacation, they may fear that mistakes will be revealed while they are gone, and that these will affect their reputation.

Another message your subconscious may be sending relates to your need for control: control over your time, your life, your world, and the list goes on...

"Who will replace me while I am gone?"

"Can (s)he do my job as well as I do."

"How much damage will I have to fix when I come back?"

Not being able to trust others may indicate a lack of self-confidence. For some, maintaining control gives them a false sense of power, making them believe it boosts their self-confidence. Imagine for a moment that you come back from vacation anticipating that while you were gone, things fell apart, only to find out that everything ran very smoothly without you. What a shock! You may now think: "After all, I am not the only one who can deliver outstanding results. I guess I have to trust and let go."

Perfectionism and control will influence your behaviour and will make you crave adrenalin: "Thanks to adrenalin I can keep at this pace indefinitely and still manage my life!" Your quest for a job perfectly done may make you ignore what your body is telling you. Fatigue is ignored, aches and pain get a quick fix. But you can't see the fuel gauge indicating "red alert", so you continue to run on empty... If or when you decide to take time off, you may be in for a surprise: you spend your vacation in bed, sick. Your fuel gauge has reached the "below empty" mark. The body has a phenomenal way of making you stop, forcing you to listen to it. You and your body have become out of synch.

Our body is our instrument. If we want it to keep playing beautiful music, we must schedule regular tune-ups. A musician tends to his instrument with loving care: he keeps it polished, listens to its vibrations, because he wants it to perform at its best. If you don't look after your instrument (yourself), you can't expect it to perform flawlessly. The key to your success is maintaining a balanced emotional, intellectual, physical and mental health. Welcome vacation time as an ideal way for you to rest, disconnect (this includes turning off your Blackberry!), play, and enjoy the sounds of life...

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